

GANDHI'S FIGHT
FOR FREEDOM
1942

Edited by
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To
L. SUNAM RAI, M.A.
who is
a sincere patriot,
an ideal citizen
a true friend and
a best guide

CONTENTS

	Page
1. Preface by R. N. Khanna	4
2. Moral challenge to the British and the Allies by Prof. C. L. Gheewala, M. A.	7
3. Open Letters to Amery, Gandhi and Wavell by the Rt. Hon'ble Srinivasa Shastri ...	19
4. Is Government Responsible for Dead-lock by Srinivasa Shastri	26
5. The Present Tense by Mr. Arthur Moore	28
6. Congress and Dead-lock by Mr. Kalinath Ray	35
7. Impartial Tribunal must be set-up by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Dr. M. R. Jayakar, Dr. S. Sinha and others ...	40
8. Last Hours in India by Edgar Snow ...	44
9. What we should Offer India by Edwards Thompson	59
10. Important Questions by Mahatma Gandhi...	66
11. An Important Interview by the late Shriyut Mahadev Desai	69
12. Congress—not totalitarian by C. Rajagopala- chariar
13. Let's get a move on by the Rt. Hon'ble Srinivasa Shastri
14. British Policy towards India by L. S. Amery —the Secretary of State for India ...	87

PREFACE

India faces a serious crisis. The leaders of public opinion who in normal times under favourable conditions would have helped the Government in the successful prosecution of war, find themselves shut-up behind prison bars. As compared to freedom the jail life has become more familiar to them. The unsympathetic attitude of our rulers has all along been the main cause of discontent prevailing in India. The Government of India Act of 1935 which our rulers thought, would usher in a new era remains a dead letter. The Second Great War has lingered on and so has the deadlock in India. Disappointment and frustration face us in every sphere of political life. Every sincere attempt on our part to come to a settlement with the representatives of the British Government has failed miserably. We need not go beyond August, 1942, nor it will help us to dilate upon the causes of the failure of Cripp's mission. Much has been said and written on that score. The only fact that stares us in the face is that the bureaucracy has remained adamant. Mahatma Gandhi wanted to explain the position of the Indian National Congress to the Viceroy with special reference to the resolution passed by the All India Congress Committee on August 8, 1942. He was given no chance but clapped in jail along with his other colleagues. Immediately after that he wrote a letter to Lord Linlithgo but got a very curt reply. Mr. C. Rajagopalachari requested the Government to be allowed to meet Gandhiji but was not allowed.

Even Mr. Phillips who represented in India the President of the United States of America, was refused permission to see Mr. Gandhi. During the days when the Great Leader was on fast and after its successful termination, there was a chance for the Government of India to resolve the deadlocks but the opportunity was not availed of. Even the resignation of three most popular members from the Executive Council of the Viceroy had no effect. The speeches delivered in the Central Legislatures fell on deaf ears. The demand put forward by the All India Leaders' Conference has not been heeded to. Mahatma Gandhi wrote to Mr. M. A. Jinnah but his letter was not even forwarded to the Muslim League leader. The open letters written by the Rt. Hon'ble Srinivasa Shastri to the Secretary of State for India, the Viceroy of India and Mahatma Gandhi have evoked no response from authoritative quarters. This is how and why the deadlock continues, though nobody wants it to continue.

Here in these pages, an attempt has been made to throw some light on this topic. Every article speaks for itself. Mr. Gheewala has put the Congress case in most clear terms as it was now going by default. The views expressed by Mr. Arthur Moore and Mr. Kalinath Ray deserve our serious consideration. Both of them speak with authority as they were connected for a long time with two organs of public opinion in India. The open letters should get the widest possible publicity. The interview given by Mr. Amery, Secretary of State for India to the Political Correspondent of the "Sunday Times" on October 17, 1943, makes plain the political policy which the British Government intend to follow in India. The interview is being published almost in full for the first time as it has got a special significance because it appeared almost simultaneously with the arrival of our new Viceroy in India. In addition to these, the articles written by Edgar Snow and Edwards Thompson have been included in the collection as they explain the political situation in India so lucidly. Mahatma

Gandhi's article under the heading "Important Questions" and the details of an interview which he gave to *Foreign Journalists* are sure to prove useful while studying the case for Congress.

In this connection the remarks made by Sir Alfred Watson in his speech which he delivered at a meeting of the East India Association held at Caxton Hall, Westminster on Friday, December 8, 1939, under the chairmanship of Sir Edward Campbell, throw a vivid light on the realities of the political situation in India and I feel tempted to reproduce them below for the benefit of the readers. He said :

"One cannot wholly acquit the Government of India of responsibility for an initial misunderstanding. In spite of reserved powers, and notwithstanding that a boycott by Congress of the Central Legislature was already in existence, consideration of Indian acceptabilities would have suggested some consultation with the leaders of popular parties before India's full participation in the war was proclaimed. Such conversations might have meant a delay of a few days. They might well have failed to bring about agreement, but they would have avoided the allegation that India was being committed without her voice being heard.

"Bureaucracy in a hurry is fertile in mistakes, in India as elsewhere. Much passion might have been averted and much of the subsequent negotiations might have been unnecessary had there been recognition from the beginning, as there was subsequently, that it was desirable to associate with India's war effort the leaders of all the major political parties in India.

"Yet I conclude on a note of hope. Indian politicians, when one establishes actual contact with them, are for the most part reasonable men. They cannot rest satisfied with a position that is a defeat of commonsense."

R. N. KHANNA

Moral Challenge to the British and the Allies

By Prof. C. L. Gheewala, M.A.

"Any person however great he may be who distorts the proposals I have made will be condemned by history as an enemy of the Allied Cause."

(Gandhiji's reply to *London Times*, *Harijan*, p. 203)

I

WHEN the whole world is engulfed in a titanic struggle, the manner in which the present Indian political stalemate is viewed by the British Government makes one suspect whether the British statesmen have a full appreciation of the issues at stake in this second World War. The nature and character of the Indian demand is either less sympathetically understood or deliberately presented in a distorted manner before the world by the huge apparatus of propaganda which is solely controlled by the British Government in this country.

Instead of handling the Indian question with vision and statesmanship, the situation has been allowed to deteriorate since August 9, 1942, the date of passing the famous resolution by the Congress urging the immediate withdrawal of the British rule from India. On the clapping of the responsible Congress leaders, the struggle manifested itself both in violent and non-violent forms, revealing the staggering mass energy of the Indian people. Only a bureaucracy, tied down to a closed static system, with its characteristic lack of imagination, can seek to explain

in relation to the whole. The conversation takes place with same Mr. Stuart Emeny and may be reproduced here :

" It will be your biggest movement ? "

" Yes. my biggest movement."

(The Government document ignores the remaining part which refers to the question of time-limit).

" But if there is no response," asked Mr. Emeny, " what time-limit would you set before launching the campaign ? "

" Assuming that the A.-I. C. C. confirms the resolution, there will be some time but not very long-taken. As far as I can see just now it may be a week or two."

" But you will give time ? "

" Of course as I have always done before launching on every struggle."

" If the Viceroy asks you to go to Delhi, will you accept his invitation ? "

" Oh, yes. And then you forget that the Viceroy and I have become personal friends. if a public man and a Viceroy may be so called."—(*Harijan*, July 26th, 1942, p. 241).

It is only a perverted bureaucracy that can view such willingness for time-limit and delay as intended, not for the purposes of negotiations but for putting the finishing touches to a plan to which its authors were already committed but which might not yet be completely ready to put into execution. (*Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances*, p. 15). Have the government been able to produce any proof regarding any plot which Gandhiji or his colleagues were hatching in secret, before their arrest ? It is a base insinuation unwarranted by any piece of evidence, except a sinister and subtle reading of motives which did not exist.

* The government knew from the public utterance of Gandhiji that he contemplated sending a letter before taking concrete action, urging for an impartial examination of the Congress Case. The government knew that given an opportunity, and if convinced, Gandhiji would be prepared to accommodate genuine difficulties. But as Gandhiji has pointed out in his letter of August 14th to the Viceroy, the government was afraid of this very 'extreme caution and gradualness with which the Congress was moving towards direct action,' and that it might make 'the world opinion veer round the Congress as it had already begun doing and expose the hollowness of the grounds for the government's rejection of the Congress demand.' Consequently, the government precipitated a policy of wholesale arrest of the Congress leaders and started a veritable campaign of vilification and misrepresentation of the nature of the demand made by Gandhiji and the Congress. Is this what is meant by statesmanship? What the government meant by 'wiser counsels,' was that India should abandon her claim to independence and commit political suicide.

The foregoing is just an illustration. Any sober examination of the whole document would lead one to infer from government's own data and assumptions that rather than present an impartial view, it seeks to misrepresent and malign Mahatma Gandhi in the eyes of the world and particularly the Allies. Attempts have been made to represent him as an appeaser, a pro-Japanese, a wily and crooked politician utterly lacking in sense of reality, paying only lip-services to his professed principle of Non-violence and using it only as a convenient mask. Gandhiji's may be a lone voice crying in wilderness, in a world saturated with violence but it is a sheer travesty of justice to misrepresent the world's greatest democrat and exponent of Non-violence in this manner. It shakes one's faith in the *bona fides* of the government when it chooses to play the role of the prosecutor, the judge and the hangman at one and the same time. Foreign opinion on the White Paper as a 'White-wash Paper' or a

‘document that reflects gravely over the honesty and competence of those engaged in the compilation,’ as expressed in the *Daily Worker*, can hardly be considered as edifying for the government. All this strengthens the case of a demand for a proper impartial tribunal.

II

However, what has struck the present writer the most is the clever *Suppresio veri* logic followed by the government in presenting its case. The compiler of the document, of course, with the full sanction of the government, has done the greatest harm and injustice to the Allied Cause and this country, by deliberately suppressing the most crucial, the most important argument advanced by Gandhiji in presenting his case. It is the moral basis of the Allied Cause. Gandhiji has time and again challenged this basis of the British and the Allied Cause which is announced from the Press the Platform and the Radio, as being one of a holy crusade against the brutal forces of Nazism and Fascism and a vindication of the principles of Democracy and Freedom. Here are a few statements from the writings of Gandhiji which adequately represent his demand. Let the British and the Allies face the moral challenge and answer it, if they are genuinely fighting the cause of Democracy and Freedom. The issue had never been posed so pointedly before.

Replying to a question during the Bombay Press interview, Gandhiji challenged the moral basis of the Allies in the following statement :

“Both America and Britain lack the moral basis for engaging in this war, unless they put their own houses in order, while making a fixed determination to withdraw their influence and power both from Africa and Asia and remove the colour bar. They have no right to talk about protecting Democracy and protecting civilisation and human freedom unless the canker of white superiority is destroyed in its entirety.” (*Harijan*, 24th May, 1942, p. 168).

And compare with this the grave warning of Pearl Buck re-echoing Gandhiji's challenge :

" The deep patience of the coloured people is at an end. Everywhere among them there is the same resolve for freedom and equality that White Americans and British have, but it is a grimmer resolve, for it includes the determination to be rid of white rule and exploitation and White Race prejudice, and nothing will weaken this will Are we all-out for Democracy, for total justice, for total peace based on human equality or are the blessings of Democracy to be limited to White people only ? " ("Tinder for To-morrow."—*Asia*).

During the course of his interview with the American journalists Mr. Chaplin and Mr. Belldon Gandhiji most emphatically repudiated the suggestion that there was any intention of helping the Japanese. Here are his own words : " I want to oppose Japan to-a-man.. There is not the slightest room for accomodating the Japanese. No, I am sure that India's independence is not only essential for India, but for China and the Allied Cause." Further to the question. ' What can the Americans do to have your demand implemented ? ' Gandhiji unmasking the veil of unreality and hypocrisy that envelops the Indian atmosphere touched upon the same vital issue :

" It is an unwarranted claim Britain and America are making, the claim of saving Democracy and Freedom. It is a very wrong thing to make that claim when there is this terrible tragedy of holding a whole nation in bondage. . . . The Allies have no right to call their cause to be morally superior to the Nazi cause so long as they hold in custody the fairest part and one of the most ancient nations of the earth." (*Harijan*, 14th June, 1942, p. 187).

Summing up his attitude in the leading article of the same number, Gandhiji has put his case on unassailable moral and political grounds :

" One thing and only one thing for me is solid and

certain. This unnatural prostration of a great nation—it is neither nations nor peoples—must cease if the victory of the Allies is to be ensured. They lack the moral basis. I see no difference between the Fascists or Nazi powers and the Allies. All are exploiters, all resort to ruthlessness to the extent required to compass their end. America and Britain are very great nations, but their greatness will count as dust before the bar of dumb humanity, whether African or Asiatic. They and they alone have the power to undo the wrong. They have no right to talk of human liberty and all else unless they have washed their hands clean of the pollution.” (*Harijan*, 14th June, 1942).

III

This second World War is not merely a war of between two groups of powers, between forces of darkness and light, justice and injustice, right and wrong but in the words of President Roosevelt, we are living in a world revolution in which this war represents one of the decisive stages. If this decisive stage has to fulfil its function, the Western capitalist Democracies which represent within themselves the inherent contradiction of being Democrats at home and Autocrats abroad, have to relegate to the scrap-heap of history, the imperialist ways of racial arrogance, the whiteman's burden, and the consequent exploitation of the Eastern peoples. The British Empire has left behind it a dark record of the sale of Negroes in the West Indies under the British Flag, the Kaffir wars with Basutos, Zulus and Metabele, the wars of extermination against the Blacks in Australia, the atrocities and corruption of the East India Company, the horrors of the Sepoy Mutiny, the questionable diplomacy of the annexations in India and the present moral prostration and the impoverishment of the Indian masses. Such an empire must be liquidated whether Mr. Churchill wills it or not.

‘The way of empire is the way of death,’ says E. W. Stratford and unless the British Empire divests itself of hypocrisy and is made ‘to disgorge her ill-

literal accuracy that the character of their governance competes in barbarism and squalor, with that of the outlaws of Europe."

It is the age-old British policy of *divide et impera* to encourage every vested interest openly or secretly so that the minorities and such other interests may always loom large on the political horizon and any accommodation or agreement may be delayed in favour of British domination.

"We patronise," says Prof. Laski, "these dissidents from unity in the same way though much more subtly as the Conservative Party has so long patronised the separation of Ulster; and with the same evil consequences."

He further candidly confesses that :

"The character of our rule in India, maintained in defiance of Indian demands has long stained our reputation for plain dealing all over the world; until the advent of Hitler and Mussolini it was the classic example of imperialist exploitation."

Yet, the British imperialists seem to look at the world with the old blinkers on. They are pastmasters in the art of manipulating pretexts and devices for clinging to their vested interests and at the same time, 'most prolific in their announcement of their yearning for the fulfilment of India's ambition.' Mr. Amery, the arch-exponent of what is known as Vansittartism, endlessly goes on recounting the catalogue of benefits derived by India from the imperialist rule of Britain. And, Mr. Churchill clouded in the supreme conceit of his racial arrogance, shudders at the prospect of liquidating 'the ill-gotten empire.'

Are Indians to remain as mere serfs and helots of the empire? Have not they the right to challenge the implications of high-sounding declarations about justice, preservation of democracy and freedom of speech and individual liberty? Or, are these phrases just intended to merely serve as a mask for covering

imperialist designs to preserve the empire? For whose democracy, for whose freedom, for whose liberty shall the Indians fight when they are denied all this and 'governed by a tyranny'? This is a monstrous contradiction. The crucial question is whether the democratic forces in England and in the Allied countries will be able in time to bring their governments to realise 'the wisdom, the stark necessity of setting India free.' The sooner the British end their paramountcy over India the better for Indians and for themselves and the Allies and as Prof. Laski rightly points out, *there is no moment more fitting to end it than in a war where the British claim 'to be the world-defenders of democracy and freedom.'* The Britons who talk glibly of liberty and democracy of the vanquished nation cannot complacently view the performances of Mr. Amery and Lord Linlithgow in suppressing a popular movement for the self-same ideals in India. Bureaucratic determination to wreck a powerful organization like the Congress will result in sheer futility and such a policy betrays lack of understanding of the powerful democratic forces it represents in this country. To quote Louis Fischer's warning:

"If they crush Gandhi, then one of our biggest successes in this war for democracy and freedom will be the smashing of a great world-known movement for democracy and freedom."

It is imperative to realise that 'India in bondage can play no effective part in defending herself and affecting the fortunes of the war that is desolating humanity.' It is only by an act of declaration and recognition of India's freedom that the British and the Allies can announce to the world, to the millions right in Germany and Italy, to the enslaved of Asia and Africa that their aim is truly free, truly democratic New Order in Europe and the world and that they have done once and for all with the prerogatives of imperialism.

Let Britain grant this major premise and all other problems will assume their normal proportions.

No one denies the complexity of numerous problems which India has to face but so long as Britain plays the role of the third bargaining party, the penumbra of mutual distrust and suspicion makes any solution well-nigh impossible. Independent India fighting to preserve her own independence against the impending menace of the Fascist hordes, will forge new sanctions for unity through continuous co-operation and collaboration between various communities. Let the lurking suspicion that Britain fights only to save her empire and that America is bolstering her up to establish a new Anglo-American imperialism be removed by this supreme gesture.

As Gandhiji has rightly said : " only after the end of British power and a fundamental change in the political statuts of India from bondage to freedom, will the formation of a truly representative government, whether provisional or permanent be possible." Let it be remembered that, in event the British domination is withdrawn, the Congress does not want the transfer of power all to itself. What the Congress stands for is the organization of the supreme total effort for national defence at this hour of peril. One may certainly feel jubilant over the Italian advance but that need not make us oblivious of the threatening Eastern menace.

The situation demands a bold stroke of constructive statesmanship. Such an act is bound to inspire and enthuse the people to fight for their liberty and thus vitalise men's minds with a new promise and hope. Then ' Democracies would win not only war but the Peace.' But, till then in the words of Gandhiji :

" The Allies are carrying the burden of a huge corpse—a huge nation lying prostrate at the feet of Britain, I would even say, at the feet of the Allies."

—*Modern Review.*

Srinivasa Sastri's Open Letters to Amery, Gandhi and Wavell

The Right Hon'ble V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, in Open Letters to the Secretary of State for India, the Viceroy and Mahatma Gandhi on the present political situation, says :

LETTER TO Mr. AMERY

DEAR Mr. Amery.—Was your speech at the farewell to our new Viceroy meant as a specific Instrument of Instructions? If so, it was both misconceived and unhelpful. You told him in effect that he was not to take the initiative in resolving the deadlock but wait till the Congress High Command eat the humble pie and withdrew their offending resolution. Was it right to tie him down to the present do-nothing policy. Should he not be free to try a new approach to the problem? We trust he will not be long in perceiving that your instructions are more honoured in the breach than in the observance. The war guilt clause, it is now generally admitted, was not wisest part of the Peace Treaty of 1920. Men of honour do not require men of honour to do public penance, they trust the new facts to teach the necessary lesson. The war and the internal situation of India unfold promising phases.

Role of Peacemaker Again

In 1930, I pleaded at the Round Table Conference for honourable parley with those of another political faith whom the logic of events had proved wrong.

Let me perform a similar office now and invite your co-patriots and you not to heed the promptings of passion but to walk in the footsteps of the noble statesmen who in similar circumstances in the last century proclaimed "No, I will not govern in anger." Verbal recantation is not of the essence of a changed outlook. The failure of the Congress policy is writ large on the face of affairs. None will deny it.

When Mr. Churchill recently made a pilgrimage to Moscow, did he wear sack-cloth and ashes? When he consented to the inclusion of the right of secession in the Cripps scheme, did he make open confession of previous unwisdom? When Lord Linlithgow paid belated homage the other day to the ideal of Indian unity, did he sit on the stool of repentance and withdraw in set terms the 'liberum' veto that his declaration of August, 1940, had gratuitously conferred on the head of the Muslim League? Demand not of our revered leaders that they stand with tears in their eyes at the gates of the Viceroy's palace and strike penitential palms on aching cheeks. Play the part of the magnanimous victor and the healing statesman. Do not, I adjure you, sow dragon's teeth on the ancient and hallowed soil of this country.

Letter to Mahatma

Dear Mahatma,—I pen these words in anguish. The days are hard for our motherland. Fain would I know how you feel so that no random words of mine might add to the wretchedness and desolation which fill every minute of your life. Bear with me once more. At similar crises before it has been my unenviable lot to address you with harshness of unheeding truth but in accents of love. The people of India for whom you have slaved these thirty years as no one has done lie prostrate in the deadly grasp of hunger, destitution and stark despair. A dismal sense of frustration oppresses them like a nightmare. Their trust in you, however, is the same, if possible, tenderer and purer for your sufferings and sorrows. Promising plans are promising

only so far as you may work them out. Proposals from any quarter are canvassed but only so long as the execution stage is not reached, then they ask for you and speculation stops. Officials in their way and for their reasons, unofficials in their way and for their reasons, all alike turn to you. Only on half a dozen occasions have human hearts yielded themselves up in such complete thrall to one without birth, beauty of form, possessions, force of arms or honours to distribute.

Ahimsa and Congress

Every true Indian is proud that he can call you his fellow-countryman, and those that you have honoured with your friendship are among the blessed ones of the generation. Being one of these, I have used my privileged position now and then to demonstrate against the way you have allowed the doctrine of 'ahimsa' of which you are the unanointed apostle, to be muddled in its application to the work of the Congress. Your answer is that you always meant to employ it in the furtherance of rational aims and could not help the lapses. You add, too, with humility all your own, that you are not a saint strayed among politicians, but a politician appearing like a saint and not to be judged by the highest standards. I am, however, unreconciled and own to a feeling of grief that one so near the summit of purity should not reach it.

Dear brother, an opportunity has come, the like of which never was and never will be for generations. At the ensuing Peace Conference, which may meet sooner than most people expect the afflicted nations will seek ardently for brave and honoured advocates of justice, equality and brotherhood without distinction of race, colour or religion. You must be there. Who, if not you? War must be banished for ever from the earth and all possibility of its recurrence provided against, so far as it can be provided against by human foresight. Would you be missing on that supreme

occasion? No, a thousand times no. Pacifism, non-violence, Ahimsa—Whenever and wherever these words are pronounced, the name of Gandhi will occur to the minds of people all over the earth. What should keep you from bearing irrefragable witness to the truth that you have ever cherished in your heart, the truth that must resound through the ages when your body has perished.

After several humiliations due to association with earthly causes, the hour of exaltation approaches you. I see you, great soul, in a vision of glory, go up the mount of expectancy of a weary waiting world, raise high the right hand of blessing, and solemnly utter the word which is in all hearts and which comes full of hope and full of meaning from your inspired lips.

Come then, bestir yourself. Not a day should be lost. There is so much to do before civilised administration can be restored and competent authorities in the province and at the Centre can be formed with national aims and appropriate means for the choice of delegates through whom the soul of India can speak to the rest of the world. Don't say you are not free. You can be free, if you but realise that you are waited for. Your last movement has not borne the fruit that you wished. Admit what everybody sees. No hesitation need be felt in recognising facts. You yield, no doubt. But you yield to Fate and not to man. Stoop and conquer. Many a hero before you has done and many a hero after you will do so. Let us consult the *Ramayana*, a book which we revere alike. A good general should vary them. These are the words of "Hanuman" whose aid all Hindus invoke before beginning great enterprises.

"No single plan is adequate to achieve even a small aim. Only he can succeed in his purpose who adopts different plans in different circumstances."

Letter to Viscount Wavell

Your Excellency,—My heart misgives as I think of the many delicate and intricate tasks that await

you. We have been assured of your resolution; independence of judgment and liberal outlook. That is satisfactory, but not sufficient. Your training must have exalted obedience high above all other virtues and made you impatient of the slowness and caution of diplomacy and the compromises of Parliamentary negotiation. Besides the Indian politicians' attitude, suspicious and soured by generations of deferred hope, may be a puzzle and soon become your despair. Can you look beyond the narrow circle of official advisers and invite to your aid the patriotism of the land, which now is held at arm's length, because it will not neglect Indian honour and Indian welfare? Can you see, in men and women branded as disloyal, eager colleagues in the service of India and of the Empire? Anxious eyes and ears from every corner will be directed towards New Delhi to find out whether you weigh well and not merely Maxwell.

The great desideratum is a bold measure of appeasement not likely to appear in the firmament of official possibility, to be pushed forward in its consummation in the faith that generous confidence begets generous confidence. Government by Section 93 must end and the legislatures must be restored to their normal function. As nearly as may be consistent with the requirements of the war, the Centre must be endowed with the authority and prestige that betoken in the eyes of the world the early attainment of dominionhood, so that our representatives may hold up their heads, whether at the Imperial Conference or at the World's Peace Conference, as the recognised equals of the representatives of Great Britain, Canada, Australia and South Africa. This is a change of great magnitude and will require unintermittent and devoted labour, even if begun to-morrow. And it must be begun to-morrow. For the sun of armistice may suddenly burst through the cloud of war, brightening the planet and calling upon the nations to tackle the hundred problems of peace.

Communal Differences

"I do not forget the communal difficulty. How can I? Thousands on the one side and thousands on the other are equally crazy and determined to use every means to secure their wish. Arbitration promises the only feasible and the only honourable way out. If Government will bring their earnest mediation and their enormous influence to bear, they have a good chance of securing agreement. My hope is strong. What the great powers submit to in the interests of peace, no section of a country's population dare reject. "If this will not suffice, it must appear that malice bears down truth."

Twice within the experience of the present generation, once in Geneva and once in Northern Ireland, have the British authorities at Westminster been deflected from the right course by threat of armed resistance by a truculent minority. Let not the ignominy happen a third time. Millions will pray devoutly for the success of Your Excellency's effort. If you pull arbitration through and settle this problem, you will have secured a victory in the realm of civil affairs which any conqueror in history, living or dead, may envy.

I will ask leave to say another word. The Secretary of State has declared his fear that British parliamentary democracy may not suit India and advises us to invent a new type of popular government for ourselves. I am not known to be an uncharitable critic; but I find it hard to believe that he can be serious. What Britain does not know and has not tried, she cannot conscientiously recommend to people less experienced or guide them in operating it. For a century and a half, we have studied British institutions and admired them. When Mr. Montague framed his proposals and published them for criticism in India, some of us would have preferred an irremovable executive. I was among these. But he was all for the system of ins and outs and the majority of our leaders were attracted by the excitement and struggle

incidental to recurring trials of parliamentary skill and strategy. For 20 years and more we have practised it and became used to it. To pronounce us unfit now and send us about in quest of another plan is to hold up things indefinitely, to strew the land with apples of discord and create such confusion as to imperil the constitutional progress so far achieved.

If it was intended to punish us for venturing to look forward to further progress in the same direction, Mr. Amery's advice would become intelligible. Before we become much older, however, his attempt will encounter the fate of Canute's command to the sea. Not in these days can a nation's freedom be denied or delayed with impunity.

Is Government Responsible for Deadlock ?

By Mr. Srinivasa Sastri

THE British Government stands pledged to make India a dominion just like Canada, South Africa and Australia. These countries have during the war vigorously asserted their rights, greatly enlarged them in practice and proved their capacity to protect the people under them. On the contrary, India has in the same period lost the partial self-government she had, bureaucracy is enthroned in full power, and her people in dire calamity look around in vain for their natural protectors.

Whose is the blame? Obviously it cannot be wholly on one side. Yet British propaganda would make it out that the Congress High Command alone were responsible and that the remedy lay altogether in their hands. An impartial observer, however, will conclude that the Government, always the predominant partner and now the uncontrolled wielder of all authority, must bear the greater share of responsibility and cannot shirk the duty of discovering and applying a suitable remedy. Besides the Peace Conference will soon summon the wisest men and women of the time for the cure of the world's ills. India's gentle soul must find free and unfettered expression on the side of the large causes like the abolition of the colour bar, the equitable adjustment of the relations between the East and the West, and the establishment of the moral

law among nations beyond all hazard. If the Viceroy or his Home Member chose the personnel of the Indian delegation, their voice would be but a muffled echo of that of the British delegation. Our true spokesmen will be found only by a true National Government at the Centre.

A true National Government at the Centre presupposes true National Governments in the Provinces. The rule of section 93 must go. Does it mean general elections all over the country, and the release of political prisoners and detenus? Yes. I don't expect unmanageable commotion or any impediment to war work. If there was any risk of the kind, it would be less than the rooted suspicion and the hatred that now poison the atmosphere.

True, alas, Hindus and Muslims threaten civil war, if they cannot each have their own way. The thinking part of the world will pass their own judgment on a great power which after more than a century of paramountcy finds its two greatest communities ranged irreconcilably against each other proclaims its inability and unwillingness to interfere and recognises only one inevitable consequence, *viz.*, the continuance of its own rule. The independent nations of the world have discovered in arbitration the only honourable method of settling their disputes. In so doing they submit to a partial curtailment of the sovereignty which they have long enjoyed and cherished. Self-determination in the case of a section of a country's population is a novel and untried idea, a figment of overwrought communal ambition. Its surrender is no great price to pay for the peaceful solution of a thorny problem.

The constitution of a satisfactory board of arbitration is a task of great delicacy. But it may be susceptible of easy solution if Government clear themselves of prepossessions and undertake in the genuine spirit of peace to make the main idea of arbitration acceptable.

The Present Tense

By Mr. Arthur Moore

FOR more than seven years Lord Linlithgow has borne a heavy burden with an equable temper, patience and courage. The review he has now given, in his address to the Legislature, of his policy and of the obstacles to success which he met in the political field is of special interest as showing how widely the sincere interpretation which a principal actor in a protracted situation can put upon policy and events may differ from that of others.

Lord Linlithgow claims—and I think that we should agree with him—that from the beginning of the war he tried hard “to remove doubts as to the intentions of His Majesty’s Government regarding India’s future.” But in every crisis the present is more important than the future, and correct action in the present is the only means of removing doubts about whether there will be correct action in the future. The future is created directly out of the past and the present. The task is “to fill the unforgiving minute with sixty seconds worth of distance run.” For practical men it is a paradox to plan for the future and neglect the present.

Lord Linlithgow has consistently pointed to the future. He has talked about constitution-making, about the necessity that the constitution shall be evolved by Indians themselves, about the lamentable lack

written constitutions but by creating new precedents when necessity arises, in short by just advancing. When war broke out Indians took the same line. The war, they said, is no time for constitution-making. And clearly a national war government with real responsibility would be the most real of all constitutional advances. When the time arrived for constitution-making, drafting would be simplified by the fact that a working system was actually in being. By absolutely rejecting this British practical method which Indians wished to follow and by insisting on the theoretical path of legal constitution-making by Indians themselves,—and that too in war time, of all times,—His Majesty's Government has inevitably increased Indian suspicion of its ultimate good faith.

In his recent address the Viceroy did indeed recognise, in regard to constitution-making, that "the process cannot be completed under the stress of war." But he regretted that greater progress had not been made in the constitutional field, and he urged Indian leaders to "set to work at once, without wasting a day." (Unfortunately, this advice is made more difficult to follow because the deadlock produced by Indian insistence on the present and His Majesty's Government's insistence on the future has put important leaders out of action.)

Hindu-Moslem Unity

I hope that I am writing for both Indian and British readers but as a Briton addressing Britons, I think we would do well to realise, purely objectively, the general Indian conviction of our insincerity regarding Hindu-Moslem unity. Superficially and on a cold, hard, material basis, Britain has much to gain and little to lose by Hindu-Moslem disagreement, and since cynical material judgments prevail throughout the world and we are nowhere credited with sentimentality in war-time, we should be as chary of professing that we desire Hindu-Moslem unity as we are

wary, for example, of the company in which we admit that we believe in the possession of immoral souls, or in the present-day reality of Christianity. If we profess too freely or too lightly that we desire Hindu-Moslem unity, we shall certainly be written down as hypocrites. Indians know us so well, and understand also so well how cooked mental food served out from Parliaments and presses stimulates our swallowing power and aids our digestive juices, that they may, in individual cases, write us down as unconscious hypocrites, fools rather than knaves. But, for our own sakes, we should realise that no Indian who thinks about it at all, from the most ultra-loyal Maharajah or the most greedy candidate for honours or contracts down to the eager young nationalist school-boy, believes for a moment in His Majesty's Government's desire for Hindu-Moslem unity. To them it is not a suspicion but a certainty, an axiom, that the admitted fact of Hindu-Moslem disunity, is welcome to His Majesty's Government. And for them the final proof that they are in the realm of knowledge and not of conjecture is precisely this British war-time insistence on theoretical constitution-making by Indians themselves. For till the war came, this was officially anathema. Not only when the Simon Commission was appointed, but afterwards in the Round Table period and during the passage of the Government of India Bill, the emphasis was precisely the opposite. We were told that though of course Indians should be consulted and the largest possible measure of agreement sought, the shaping of the constitution was Britain's responsibility and that she could not possibly divest herself of it.

Laughing in the Beard ~~THEY~~ !

Indians of course understand war-time exigencies. They regard the brand-new doctrine as a war-time device, based on distrust of themselves, and on the bureaucracy's curious belief in its own greater efficiency in conducting a war for which it refused to prepare. While its chiefs were appeasing Hitler and Japan, united Indian opinion, with the exception of Subhas

Bose's few Fascists and Mr. Gandhi's pacifist following a mere handful, compared with his gigantic following in his other capacity as the leader of fighting nationalism, was fiercely opposed to both Hitler and Japan. But allowances must be made for war, and though Indians are apt to regard British official solicitude for Hindu-Moslem unity as the philosophic "lie in the soul", an engrained hypocrisy, they are used to waiting and they can bear it when they are told that they must wait. When in addition, however, their own desire to be practical, to drop the party game and constitutional wrangling, and from a national war coalition is not merely turned down, but in addition His Majesty's Government accuses them of unpracticallity, claims that in deserting its own British tradition of war-time national coalitions and insisting instead on constitution-mongering it alone is being constructive, and invoking Britian's long Parliamentary experience professes a keen desire to help, no politically conscious Indian regards that as even reasonable war-time window-dressing. It is too much. It suits some to accept it, but on a 'rishkhand' basis of laughing in the beard, and this does not add to our respect.

The "Lie in the Soul"

Yet there is more to it than that. The "lie in the soul" is not, in the deepest layer, a lie. The Briton's defect in relation to subject races is a defect of his qualities. In his bones he believes in the virtues of self-government for other peoples as well as for his own where there is strong and true national desires for it. But his own nationalism has far so long been so fully satisfied that unless perhaps he has some Celtic blood, he rarely understands the infinite and perpetual sorrow of a politically conscious subject race. When, however, he at last realises that he is confronted with true national feeling, he yields and—which is all-important—he yields once and for all, and does not go back on the deal. The Irish have for so long had a political inferiority complex that they still find it difficult to realise that nationally they are

free. But free they are, as the test of war-time shows. Their mistrust of England is wholly out of date, for nothing would induce the English to go back on their deal and set about the fresh subjection of Ireland.

Is not the time now nearing when the Indian controversy should be resolved? The war has entered its final phase. The Viceroy has rightly emphasised that "the post-war phase is drawing rapidly nearer." Is His Majesty's Government going to continue to insist that agreement amongst Indians to serve in the same Government is not enough, and that they must first hammer out a written constitution before they can be given real power? Both Mr. Gandhi and the President of the Congress, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, have said that the Congress would serve under Mr. Jinnah. Mr. Jinnah has declared his desire to have Congress colleagues and has called upon His Majesty's Government to do its part and offer to hand over the power. Lord Wavell has accepted a hard task but his opportunity is proportionately great. That he is anxious to be a healer, and is as eager to see Indians unite amongst themselves as he is to restore goodwill between Britons and Indians, I am convinced. But we have to recognize that never in our time has anti-British feeling been so wide-spread and also that the policy of refusing to transfer responsibility in war-time to a national government and insisting instead on the necessity of constitution-making has bitterly accentuated Hindu-Moslem rivalry, and that most Indians believe that this was foreseen and desired by His Majesty's Government. The Indian press and public have for the most part commented on Lord Wavell's appointment without prejudice and with an open-minded goodwill which he himself has, in my humble judgment, fully earned. The important thing is that the gravity of the time should be now grasped. Unless there is a healing hand, the Allied victory for which we yearn may only serve to usher in the hardest hours for Britain in Asia, and indeed for the Western world in the East. As the war goes on and the strain on basic food supply and on transport continues,

the dangerous gaps between governments and people become ever more evident. Meanwhile on the horizon there already looms the inevitable World Peace Conference where it should now surely be evident—India cannot be truly represented by mere nominees of some London Secretary of State.

—*The Tribune.*

Congress and Deadlock

By Mr. Kali Nath Ray

ONE can understand Mr. C. Rajagopalachari's suggestion in the *News Chronicle* that Sir Stafford Cripps should meet Congress leaders and re-start negotiations at the point where they were stopped last year. One can also understand the feeling in certain political circles in England that Sir Stafford Cripps's visit to India now before Lord Archibald Wavell assumes the reins of office as Viceroy will considerably help the solution of the deadlock. But there must be a clear understanding of the pre-suppositions in either case. In order that the negotiations for ending the deadlock in India may be restarted at the point where they were stopped last year, there must obviously be a change in the attitude of either the British Government or the Congress, perhaps of both. As long as both the parties persist in their present attitude not only is there no possibility of the negotiations being restarted profitably, but there is no chance of a meeting taking place between Sir Stafford Cripps and the Congress leaders. Sir Stafford Cripps no longer occupies the almost enviable position in the British Cabinet that he held last year; and after the miserable failure of his mission in India, and especially in view of the circumstances under which it failed, it is extremely unlikely that he will revisit India on a political mission unless he can feel reasonably sure of greater success crowning his efforts. The Congress

leaders, on their side, ardently as they long for a resolution of the deadlock as the only means of saving their country in the most dreadful catastrophe that has ever befallen her, refuse to see any good in the re-starting of negotiations with Sir Stafford Cripps or any one else unless and until they are satisfied that the British Government themselves desire and are prepared to attempt a resolution of the deadlock in India on the only terms on which it can possibly be resolved. So far such assurance on the one side and such satisfaction on the other seem to be conspicuously lacking.

It is his recognition of this truth that has led Mr. Rajagopalachari to add that in order that the two parties may meet and reopen negotiations it is essential that they should let by-gones be by-gones, and treat all that has happened between April 12, 1942, when the British Minister flew from Delhi and now as "ugly dreams". No one can deny that this is the only right thing to do, that in the words of the ex-Premier of Madras it would be "the best sequel to the crack of the Axis in the West" and "the noblest start for the initiation of the Eastern campaign." But is there any indication of a recognition of this truth by the parties most vitally concerned? Have not the Viceroy in India and the Secretary of State in England, for instance, declared at least half a dozen times during the last few months that they will not only have no dealings with the Congress themselves unless and until the Congress has definitely abandoned the policy embodied in the August resolution, but will not even permit other political parties and groups in India to have contact with the Congress with a view to bringing about a change in the Congress policy? That is not "letting by-gones be by-gones", or "ruling out charges and recriminations", but the exact reverse of it. It is the best and most effective way to perpetuate the deadlock.

On the other hand the Congress policy, despite all that has happened, is the same that it was a year ago,

house on fire, and called upon all political parties and organisations in India to rush to put out the flames irrespective of their political differences. To-day the political situation in India is immeasurably graver than at any time in the past ; and this unprecedented gravity of the political situation has synchronised with two other dangers which are at least equally grave, the danger of a foreign invasion and an unparalleled rise in the prices and an unparalleled scarcity of foodstuffs which have brought millions of people in the country to the verge of starvation, while tens of thousands are actually dying for want of food. At such a time can any one imagine that the great leaders of the Congress, most of whom fully share the spirit of selflessness of the illustrious Frenchman who exclaimed on a memorable occasion, "Let my name be blotted out and my memory perish, if only France may be free," would *hésiter* to take every possible step to extinguish the fire that is consuming the country and to save it from impending destruction ? Can any one believe that they will refuse to put out the flames because the "official extinguisher of fire" is either unwilling or unable to do so ? Is not such an attitude on their part all the more inconceivable when it is borne in mind that some of them have been unwearied in their allegation that it is the official extinguisher of fire himself whose policy has brought about the present situation ?

Let the matter be looked at from another point of view. Suppose for a moment that the British Government did adhere to their present policy indefinitely and refused to budge an inch from it, regardless of consequences. One need not pause to enquire whether such a policy would not in the long run hit them as much as it would hit India herself. The wiser among them know full well that it would do so. But you can no more make a short-sighted statesman or group of statesmen wiser by the most powerful arguments in your political battery than you can make a man virtuous by an Act of Parliament. The question which Indian patriots generally, and Con-

gressmen in particular, as being the most active, the best organised, and the most responsible among them, must ask themselves is, could they afford to remain idle or passive in the face of a situation like the present, simply because British statesmen were short-sighted or even perverse? In the political as in the physical world life consists in the perpetual adaptation of means to an end. The end before India is admittedly to save herself from destruction and to make herself free. If the Congress is to remain India's supreme national organisation, it must be unremitting in its endeavour to realise this end by every honourable and legitimate means in its power. It cannot possibly do so by adhering to a policy that dooms it to political inaction. On the contrary it must find out the best and most effective way of making itself once again the supreme leader of the national forces in India. I say "once again" advisedly, because, as every one knows, the Congress has already more than once followed this course of action to save itself and India from the ruin and stagnation that started them in the face. The present situation in India, which is without a parallel in all its history, calls for this course of action on the part of the Congress more clearly and more decisively than any previous development in India's political history. The Congress would not be the supreme living organisation that it is, nor would it deserve the unstinted sympathy and support of the overwhelming majority of political-minded Indians that it undoubtedly commands, if it could remain indifferent or irresponsible to the inconsistent call of such a situation. I can verily hear the clang of the breaking chord not in some dim, distant futurity, but in the immediate future, when men both in and outside India's great national organisation will awake in new day, and more spacious air, and when under the leadership of the Congress all that is good and true in India will march from strength to strength until it reaches the goal of India's political and constitutional independence, which has been the polar star of three generations of Indian humanity.

—*The Trit*

६ सिप्टेम्बर

Impartial Tribunal Must Be Set Up

*By Non-party Leaders **

HIS Excellency the Viceroy's recent refusal to permit any non-Congress leaders to interview Mahatma Gandhi and the speeches of Mr. Amery in the House of Commons can be reasonably interpreted as indicating that the British Government are resolved to keep Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and other prominent leaders of the Congress in detention without trial for the duration of the war. Even more significant is the denial to Mr. Phillips, the personal representative of President Roosevelt, of an opportunity to see Mahatma Gandhi. We ourselves have regretted that the Congress should have passed the resolution which it did pass on the 8th of August, 1942, at Bombay. We have also condemned the acts of violence and sabotage which took place a few months ago in this country. We wish to place beyond all doubts that we seek for no concessions for Mahatma Gandhi and his chief associates. We are not petitioners on their behalf for clemency or tenderness. Our demand is for justice and no more and no less. Grave charges have been publicly made against Mahatma Gandhi and his colleagues and it has been suggested, both in England and in India, that the Congress leaders were pro-Japanese. To the best of our knowledge and belief there is no truth in this allegation. Mahatma Gandhi's pacifism, known all over the world, should not in our opinion be interpreted as amounting to his sympathy with Japan or with any of the Axis Powers.

* Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Dr. M. R. Jayakar, Dr. S. Sinha, Sir Chunilal B. Mehta, Raja Maheshwar Dayal Seth and Kunwar Sir Jagdish Prashad.

The charges brought against Mahatma Gandhi are to be found in the published 'correspondence' between the Viceroy and Mahatma Gandhi, in Government communiques and pamphlets and in the pronouncements of the Secretary of State for India. It is somewhat remarkable that these charges have been made at a time when those who could meet them had no opportunity of rebutting them. It has been said that nothing was easier for Mahatma Gandhi than to repudiate acts of violence or acts of sabotage and to withdraw civil disobedience.

We feel that he has already repudiated the acts of violence and it is our conviction that so far as he is concerned his adherence to the doctrine of non-violence is as strong to-day as it ever was. For ourselves we do not believe in civil disobedience, either on principle or as a matter of expediency, but we are constrained to observe that matters were allowed to drift after the failure of the Cripps Mission and no attempt was made to avert a crisis by the exercise of imagination and constructive statesmanship.

Appoint a Tribunal

Taking the situation as it is we urge that the *ipse dixit* of the executive government should not be regarded as sufficient to justify the prolonged detention of imprisoned leaders without impartial investigation. Let those *ex-parte* accusations be investigated by a tribunal of unchallengable status and impartiality—a tribunal so constituted as to satisfy all reasonable men that it will carry on its investigation without fear or favour, and that its decisions will in no way be influenced by the published views of the executive government. We consider that the setting up of such a tribunal is in the highest interests of the government itself. Madame Chiang Kai-Shek has recently stated in a public speech in America that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru should be set at liberty and that speech was made after the charges against him had been broadcast to the world. Can his continued detention be

justified before world opinion if he is denied every opportunity of defending himself.

Grave Dissatisfaction

If the objection to our demand is that such an investigation into the charges against Mahatma Gandhi and his co-workers is not feasible during the war we should like to point out that in his letter to Mahatma Gandhi, dated February 5, 1943, His Excellency the Viceroy said : " If we do not act on all this information or make it publicly known, it is because the time is not yet ripe ; but you may rest assured that the charges against Congress will have to be met sooner or later and it will then be for you and your colleagues to clear yourselves before the world if you can." To this Mahatma Gandhi replied in his letter dated February 7, 1943 : " You say that the time is not yet ripe to publish the charges against the Congress. Have you ever thought of the possibility of their being found baseless when they are put before an impartial tribunal ? Or that some of the condemned persons might have died in the meanwhile or that some of the evidence that the living can produce might become unavailable ? " It is clear, therefore, that so far back as the 5th of February, 1943, the possibility of these leaders having to clear themselves before the world was considered and maintained by His Excellency the Viceroy himself. We cannot see, therefore, any valid reason why that possibility should not be translated into a fact at this stage. To the objection that the setting up of a tribunal will lead to public excitement our reply is that the continued detention of these leaders had already caused and is causing grave dissatisfaction and a keen sense of injustice in the public mind. If Mahatma Gandhi and his colleagues are not allowed to meet the charges against them until after the war and are to be kept in prison till then, the plain implication of this is that some of the most prominent Indian leaders will be kept in jail without trial for maybe five years and some of them may even die during this long interval. Mr. Amery's tauntingly pro-

vocative description of such detention as 'inoculous isolation' has only increased public resentment. Government may think that they are strong enough to ignore all such feelings and that they are the sole judges as to when and whom to arrest and detain without trial for an unlimited period. Whatever may be said of such action on the part of a government of the people, the same cannot apply to a government carried on by an irremovable executive, irresponsible to the people of this country or to its legislature and in which the key positions are still in British hands. Whatever the legal position, the Government of India must in the circumstances see a moral basis for its actions and it is with that object in view that we suggest an investigation by an impartial tribunal.

Sense of Frustration is Deeper

We should in conclusion like to point out that the Defence of India Act Rule, under which Mahatma Gandhi and his colleagues were arrested, was pronounced last month by the Federal Court in an authoritative decision to be invalid. Instead of availing themselves of the opportunity to restore those men to freedom under the sanction of a decision by the highest judicial authority in India we regret that the Government of India have tried to legalise their action by a validating ordinance. No well-wisher of the country can contemplate without grave concern a continuance of the present state of things which forebodes ill for the mutual relations between India and Britain. The sense of frustration is now deeper if less vociferous. We sincerely hope that our suggestion that the imprisoned leaders may be given a chance of clearing themselves may be accepted. If Government for any reason are not prepared to set up an impartial tribunal then justice no less than expediency, demand that Mahatma Gandhi and his colleagues should be set at liberty so that they may apply themselves as free men as we expect that they will, to a review of the situation and to the solution of the present deadlock in consultation and co-operation with other important parties.

Last Hours in India

By Edgar Snow

CAUGHT between giant pincers—Japan in the east and Germany not far in the north—people here are waiting for the rains and, these are India's last hours of non-violence. Whether the long British-kept peace is broken by the revolt of Indians demanding freedom at a moment when there is a peril of losing India to the Axis or whether as a nation she will stand united against invasion, concerns us as vitally as the outcome of the battle for the Caucasus.

Though few Americans appreciate the importance of the help that India has already given to us, fewer still realize how decisive India could become against us. The country is larger than all the territory yet conquered by Germany. It has twice the Nazi Empire's man-power. Its resources are tremendous. With the exception of Britain, Australia and Russia, it constitutes the sole remaining allied industrial base, and as a consequence of its being outside the Western Hemisphere, it is our last bastion in South Eastern Asia.

If India were to fall into the hands of the Axis, we not only lose our only present supply road to China, but the latter will come under hitherto unequalled pressure to submission. Even if China held, we will any way be obliged to abandon the idea of driving Japan from her southern conquests by land assault.

Positions throughout the Near and the Middle East are likely also to be untenable without Indian aid. Our whole strategy—probably the outcome of the war itself—would be profoundly altered.

So India must be saved for the Allied cause, if humanly possible. To help to save it we must understand the minimum conditions for its salvation. It may be that those conditions as seen through an Indian Nationalists' eyes are distorted, but those eyes must do India's fighting. Hence it is important for us to know at least as much as the Axis knows about them. At the moment there is still a small percentage behind the war. Why?

The best place to start hunting for the answer is the little town, Wardha, which lies in the heart of the Central Provinces in India, at the junction of two main railways where some 30,000 brown men consider themselves as children favoured by God. Not because there are any special charms in Wardha itself. The thermometer here hits 120 degrees or more, and many people here die annually of heat and the water is polluted. There was a cholera epidemic when I visited it and much of the population was affected by malaria. The soil round about the place is sandy and the landscape flat and uninteresting.

By entering the primitive vehicle known as tonga drawn by a decrepit nag and submitting your spine to half an hour's punishment, you reach a colony of mud huts with thatched roofs, set in a cactus-sprinkled countryside. It looks like a cross between a third-rate dude ranch and a refugee camp. A dirt-path leads through a cluster to a hut resembling the rest. It is surrounded by a fence made of sticks with a *char-kha* or spinning wheel adorning the mud wall in a crude form. A cow may wander by morosely—cows in India are rude and camels are insolent—while scrawny chickens strut about the yard.

Squatting bare-foot inside on a matted floor, and decently wrapped towards the middle with several

yards of cheese cloth sits a toothless old man of 73 with a growth of gray hair sprouting from his unexpectedly strong, broad chest and a spinning wheel between his knobby knees. As you have guessed long ago, he is Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. And a collection of buildings, chickens and cows, scorpions and poisonous snakes that infest the place and strange kindly spinners and toilers around carrying out Gandhi's creed—they are Ashrama, what the Mahatma calls Sevagram or village service.

Britain's chief thorn in the flesh—the Mahatma—thinks up ways and means of causing Mr. Churchill new headaches and administers purgatives to relieve the aches of patients in his hospital. The latter specializes in mud-pack cure for high-blood pressure—Gandhi's own remedy. Here also he edits *Harijan*, the most influential political weekly in India. As a journalist, Gandhi is a kind of combined Dorothy Thompson—Dorothy Dix. And he has just as strong opinions on every subject as ladies have on writing, ranging from advice to young maidens on their conduct when about to be raped to recommendations to Mr. Churchill on how to run the war. The world would be a different place if Americans followed Dorothy as religiously as India follows Gandhi.

Yet, it is literally a fact that this chocolate-coloured Mickey Mouse—a name given to him by Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, one of his faithful disciples for years—is in India still the most important man alive. It is a fact that you cannot follow the doings of the Indian National Congress—the majority political party here—without knowing Gandhi. You may be just as baffled afterwards of course, but to attempt to understand without seeing him at all especially against the background of Sevagram, which Gandhi says contains “the whole of the universe,” is to make life unnecessarily complicated.

Personally I travelled from one end of India to the other before making a pilgrimage. I attended the session of the All India Congress Committee in Allah-

abad and spent hours talking to Nationalists there and later went to Calcutta, Delhi, Bombay and elsewhere. I interviewed anti-war Socialists, pro-war communists and student leaders, pro-Axis followers of Subhas Chandra Bose, Moslem adherents of Mohammad Ali Jinnah and peasants and industrialists in search of a political man.

But somehow the common denomination was missing. It was hard to find a single focus by these people. Oddly enough it was the Viceroy who finally convinced me that I could not delay longer my visit to Gandhi whom I had not seen for ten years. "The Congress is nothing but Gandhi," he said. "It was and still is his organization. Always it will be his till he dies. It pivots entirely on Gandhi's political genius." And so it does. What the Viceroy would not concede was that the Congress was also Indian nationalism.

Gandhi's own remarks offer a few ready-made answers however. He is distinctly hard to take for any one schooled in the terminology of materialist politics. Pronouncements exasperatingly enigmatic are making him appear at worst a political buffoon and at best a perambulating paradox. Consider some examples.

A couple of months ago Gandhi declared that India can never attain Independence until there was communal agreement between the Congress and the Muslim League. He now condemns the Indian Communist Party for insisting on the same thing, while he himself has decided that Independence is necessary first and then unity will follow. A short while ago Gandhi demanded that the British army should leave and the Indian army should be disbanded. He now concedes the necessity for both.

When he decided recently to launch another "last struggle" for Complete Independence, he described the movement as a big favour to Britain. His proposal was "conceived in the friendliest spirit". He is anti-British from head to foot and there are plenty who will agree with him.

Few Indians are ruffled by Gandhi's indulgence in paradox and contradiction. Intuitively they understand his meaning within meaning. Nearly all the upper-class Indians are like Gandhi, dual personalities. On the one hand pragmatists with faiths founded on the material facts of life ; on the other mystics and romantics. Most Indians admit this fact and explain Gandhi by saying that he speaks two languages: One language, couched in terms of mysticism, metaphysics and tradition, is understood by the Indians masses, the other is the modern language of political realism. Both characters are true of Gandhi and both are essential for his hold on India. "You must separate Gandhi the personality from Gandhi the National leader," said Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, whose mind is of a very different order to me explaining the phenomenon. He is a highly practical politician. He is able to compromise and bargain as well as anyone when acting as leader. But he never gives up his right to speak out his mind. It is a confusion of the two roles in reportage of Indian nationalism that often makes the latter seem incomprehensible and gibberish to the outside world.

The important thing to realise is that however odd some of Gandhi's utterances may seem to us, none of them invalidate him as the National leader. Indeed, they strengthen him with the Indian masses : He is the man, he is the mind, he is the great soul whom most Indians trust, adore and blindly obey, with what physical and moral courage they possess.

Though the effects of intrusion of his personal philosophy on India's political thinking are often fantastic, nevertheless there is nothing dumb about Gandhi when finally he gets down on all fours to plan a political move. The resolution he drafted, in common with the Working Committee, last July was a cogent example. That resolution summarised the Congress attempt to win "real power" by an Indian national government "so as to enable the nation to make its fullest contribution towards the realization of

human freedom throughout the world." It stated the Congress wish to change the ill-will against Britain into goodwill and make India a willing partner in the joint enterprise of securing freedom for the nations and peoples of the world. It invited the British to give up power and help Indians to form a provisional government and agreed to the continued stationing of foreign troops under Allied Command. Here it indicated a desire to negotiate on these points. Finally, it threatened a mass struggle against Britain if the appeal was rejected.

Many in India questioned Gandhi's wisdom in threatening the use of his favourite weapons in this crisis of world freedom. But let none in Britain and America delude himself about this: Gandhi still personifies and articulates more than anyone else the thinking processes in the Indian cranium. And grievances listed against Britain by the Congress likewise are shared by virtually every educated Indian as well as a larger section of the masses than is generally supposed. It is now time to examine what those grievances are.

The first thing to remember behind all Indian complaints is the background of nearly two centuries of British domination and the history of twenty years of Indian struggle to get rid of it by reasonable methods of Non-violence. These years for the most part have been a failure and frustration. It is never forgotten that among the latter is what most Indians consider Britain's broken pledge of self-determination in exchange for Indian aid in World War I.

The second and the latest chapter in the battle for freedom began with the outbreak of the present war. A constitutional government was already operative when Britain declared India a belligerent. The result was that ministries in all Congress-controlled provinces resigned. Although since 1939 the Congress several times offered to get fully behind the war effort, if permitted to form a provisional government with central

responsibility, Britain has not yet yielded to the point.

Actually the Congress can at any time resume control in the provinces and through them might exercise great pressure on the Viceroy if they chose. Though British Governors in the provinces retain veto power, it was not used during the period of provincial self-government. But to remind Congressmen that they are thus rejecting half a loaf because they cannot have the whole now only brands you as an apologist of Imperialism.

"Indian nationalists are like Irish," said Mr. C. Rajagopalachariar, a Congress leader who lately broke away from Gandhi over the war issue to me. He added "they have been fighting the British so long that they have become incapable of weighing the value of what they already possess, in relation now, and the worse menace."

A stranger from Britain or America will at first be a little astounded to hear Indians refer to themselves as "slaves", because in many ways they are more free than we are at home. To a great extent, Indians enjoy freedom of organisation, freedom of press and freedom of assembly. They have infinitely more of all of them under the British Government, than the Chinese possess in free China. They speak out their minds with absolute freedom and there is no Gestapo and no menace to personal security or home. War has not yet added much economic hardship; there is no rationing yet of essential foodstuffs. I have seen Communist mass meetings and demonstrations in the streets of Calcutta, Delhi and Bombay where crowds shouted slogans of world revolution and denounced British Imperialism. Red flags flew untrammelled in the breeze. Nobody interfered with them. Until recently many Reds had been jailed, but now that the Communist Party supports the war, it has been legalised.

At Wardha all through the meeting where Gandhi

and the Congress plotted to oust the British Raj, there was no attempt to break up the gathering and not even a policeman in the vicinity. *Harijan* published in many languages, apparently without censorship, carried a threat of rebellion over the country. Congressmen in Wardha were unmolested.

"You have already 75 per cent freedom," I ventured to suggest to young Congressmen when they asked my opinion. I added, "It may be you are committing a major strategic error by ignoring the necessity to defend that 75 per cent: while if you concentrate on seizing the remaining 25 per cent, you might lose both." But few could see what I was talking about..

The accumulation of pre-war plus war-time frustrations has now become pathological. It manifests itself in the most profound suspicion of Britain. No amount of Churchillian eloquence dispels that distrust. To their list of reasons for hating Mr. Winston Churchill, Indians have now added the insult implied by his specific exclusion of India from the terms of the Atlantic Charter.

Among the steps leading to the final disillusionment, many Indians now list the Cripps episode which is especially wounding to Indian liberals who are pro-British nationalists. The latter have for a long time pinned their faith in the peaceful change-over of this country on the goodwill of the British Labour leaders, among whom Sir Stafford Cripps was most highly regarded. When he came to India dramatically to settle in a fortnight the terms of Indian co-operation which eluded the Viceroy for over two years, the hopes of the whole country were raised to a high point. The subsequent discovery that Sir Stafford Cripps could not offer Indians even immediate dominion status was a disastrous let-down. He simply miscalculated, thinking that a guarantee of independence after the war was enough, overlooking the changed situation with Japanese victorious

fact that Indians regarded the after-war situation now as less certain than after-life.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru himself made an astounding statement about Sir Stafford Cripps to me, "Cripps did Britain more harm in India than any Englishman sent out here in the past fifty years." He said: "Cripps insulted both our trust and intelligence." Pandit Nehru was far from alone in believing that no longer can they rely on any British promise and the only guarantee of freedom is freedom itself, seized at the earliest opportunity.

In more extreme form that distrust was directed against the United States, Russia and China as well as Britain. When the Grady mission arrived to investigate the possibilities of helping Indian industrialists, many of the latter saw in Henry only an American imperialist scheming to take over new concessions from here. When Russia signed the Anglo-Soviet treaty, others denounced it as a betrayal of India! It meant that Russia would not free India from Britain! Indians who speak well regarding China, Pandit Nehru told me, were also criticised bitterly by the nationalists. They simply do not want to be reminded that Indian freedom even if granted by Britain now would still be conditioned by international events and promptly nullifiable if the Axis won the war. An immediate cause for the present outburst is the dwindling prestige of the British Government as a result of the string of defeats suffered, especially at the hands of Japan. People in America and Britain have little conception as to how widespread is the reaction among the masses and how thoroughly Japan has deflated our prestige in military efficiency and power in the Asiatic mind. Prestige? It just isn't here any more, except in exchange for rupees. This is the greatest change in India since my last visit.

Indians are utterly fed up with all forms of imperialist discrimination based on colour prejudice and race superiority myths. Perhaps no single factor has done

more recent harm than the segregation of white refugees from brown during the exodus from Malaya and Burma, when undoubtedly preferential treatment was given to many whites. Over 2,00,000 Indians returned from conquered areas are now broadcasting their experience throughout the country itself. Everywhere they have spread stories discrediting the British, undermining confidence.

Indian industrialists and capitalists here are deeply dissatisfied with the government policy affecting war production. I have talked to most of the important producers. All of them agree that the output could be increased by two to four times with proper co-ordination, planning and supply and rationalization of industry. Henry Grady told me the same thing. Without exception Indian industrialists gave us the same story of bureaucratic obstructions, lack of planning, inefficiency and frustration of their efforts to build up Indian self-sufficiency. Almost without exception they disbelieved that Britain means to give up India after the war. In evidence they point out numerous instances where Indian development was blocked chiefly because of British needs after the war. There is no doubt that Gandhi and the Congress fully reflect the wishes of the Indian *bourgeoisie* who finance much of their activity.

It is most important to note that few Indians have confidence in British ability to lead the defense of the country against an expected invasion. The Nationalist idea is that only a government commanding the broadest following can in these times totally mobilise the nation for war. They contend that General Wavell's strategy assumes that India can be held without the support of the Indian masses, and I must say that General Wavell's remarks to me rather confirm this. To prove that popular mobilization is necessary people contrast the Malaya, Java, Burma debacles with China, Russia, even Phillipines.

Certain things only a truly Indian government which will be able to impose heavy burdens without

provoking a revolt, could do. Among these nationalists demanding a responsible cabinet point out the following :

Labour and Industry are now working almost solely from the profit motive, as frankly admitted to me by Sir Homy Mody who is the Supply Member of the Viceroy's Council. Both could greatly increase production, even without expansion of plant, if patriotism was added to other motives. Plans for moving and decentralizing factories from threatened areas and of rationalizing the industry along the lines suggested by the Grady Mission could be realized. Refugees and unemployed in the villages could be trained and taught to help to make war goods as in China. Students and educated people could be brought into defence services instead of recruitment being limited chiefly to the so-called martial races with high percentage of illiterates. Conscription might be introduced, and military training given on a vast scale. Political training could be used to strengthen the morale among both soldiers and civilians aware of the newly-won freedom to defend. Instead of workers fleeing from jobs as happened in Calcutta, Bombay and elsewhere at the first sign of alarm, they would, so the theory goes, stand at their posts as proud citizens of free India. Instead of non-violent resistance opposing necessary defence measures, people would organise help to carry out measures under Indian leadership, India would lift up her head to shake off the inferiority complex and get in tune with the rest of the world.

Some of the foregoing contentions are, perhaps, refutable but no amount of argument will change the fact that these beliefs and prejudices are universally held among the politically-conscious Indians, whatever their party affiliations be. Because not all of them joined Gandhi vociferously does not prove that they won't provide active or passive fifth column. The reasons mentioned are the main ones behind the Wardha resolution which will persist as long as Indians lack control in policy and administration.

Those reasons *plus* the realization of political leaders in the hour of the peril that they require a more dynamic programme than the present non-violent non-resistance slogans against Japan and the belief that the action is now coinciding with the supreme crisis in allied assistance in Europe, must make the deepest impression on the United Nations.

Congress felt the need to reconcile within itself as well as throughout the nation two blocs of opinion clearly beginning to divide the nationalist movement. The first favours a policy of neutrality towards Japan based on the fond hope that the Axis is appeasable. Its ideological leadership resides in Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose, the former Congress President, who fled from a British jail to Germany and now broadcasts to a large following in India, especially in Bengal. The other body of public opinion is swinging in favour of unity above all as the basis of speedy mobilization needed to ward off the inevitable Axis attempt to repeat the history of France and China in India. It is led by a small but efficient Indian communist party.

Lastly, and for us more significant than any foregoing, Pandit Nehru and the present Congress President Maulana Azad, representing the militant anti-Japanese section in the party felt the need for demonstration to induce the United States of America to bring pressure on Mr. Churchill; which means, of course, pressure from the President himself. Maulana Azad and Pandit Nehru, the latter particularly, placed some hopes on American intervention when Col. Louis Johnson, our former Commissioner in Delhi, went home last May. Pandit Nehru had told him what the Congress wanted President Roosevelt to do and indicated how Indian support for the war was mobilisable.

Since then Pandit Nehru and Louis Johnson had been corresponding and Pandit Nehru held back Gandhi for two months, waiting hopefully for Washington to act. When nothing happened, Pandit Nehru and Maulana Azad reluctantly yielded to Gandhi in

favour of the civil disobedience move. Pandit Nehru explained to me that it was the only alternative as far as he could see—blow for freedom accompanied by a last dramatic open appeal based on India's defence needs.

So the resolution was a bluff in a way, but a bluff which may have to be converted into action if called upon. Whether it can succeed now remains to be seen. If American pressure is being exerted in London for anything at the moment, it seems likely that it is about the second front issue. Meanwhile the Viceroy says he cannot set up the kind of regime the majority of Congressmen, Gandhi possibly excluded, seem to consider acceptable ; a provisional government chosen from various parties in which the Viceroy's status is reduced to a representative of the king. The old "complications" and practical difficulties are still in the way. Britain will always be able to point out to them when the independence issue is acute ! Hindu-Muslim disagreement, future status of princes, problems of minorities. The Muslim League which is the strongest Muslim political party actually represents only six per cent of the electorate which itself is a small fraction of the total population, but its President Mohammed Ali Jinnah is an extremely shrewd politician. He understands exactly what his support is worth and is driving a hard bargain. Sir Stafford Cripps has already virtually promised him an independent Muslim State which is his goal and it was this which most incensed Gandhi who called it "sinful". Now a communal agreement as a condition before independence may well be impossible to achieve.

Anyway now the Congress impatiently dismisses the said seemingly impossible "practical difficulties" as creations of the British policy of *divide at impera*, in what seems to many a characteristic refusal to face reality. "Get out and leave us alone" they say. "Princes and minority will then come to reasonable terms quickly enough once you are no longer here to lean upon."

Civil war rather than a settlement is the British fear of the consequences of hastily organizing a provisional government. In conversation with me Mr. Jinnah declared, perhaps a bit vain-gloriously, that if the British agreed to the Congress demand "Muslims would, without doubt, revolt throughout India". On the other hand, there is also the danger of a civil war, if the Congress nationalists launch a disobedience campaign now. The effects might any way physically and morally immobilize India, just as the Japs are preparing to attack by the end of the monsoon. Thousands of able citizens would be thrown into jail and defeatism would become general. Beyond that, however, this writer denies the immediate danger of civil war regardless of the solution of the beautiful muddle.

Another thing is also certain, however. Only an incredible capacity for self-deception could now prevent us from recognizing the imperative necessity of making every effort immediately to release all possible power and responsibility to Indians, except where it is demonstrably incompatible with the defence requirements of the allies. Now this is the only way of retaining any following in this part of the world, short of overwhelming force which we simply don't possess. And by "demonstrably" I don't mean any of the stock arguments. Sound as they may seem to some even now, they would never excuse us in Asiatic eyes if, while still denying the understandable Indian desire for responsibility in their own country in a moment of dire peril, the British and ourselves failed to save the country—as well as we might with a hostile population behind us. If it comes to that, India will be lost beyond redemption. The only thing we have at stake is the goodwill of the Indian people, and if we lose that, we have lost all.

To my astonishment many observers here still think otherwise but I have seen enough to convince me that we cannot hold India against both the Indians and Japanese. That is the alpha and omega lesson of

lost empire which history has been trying to drum into our heads throughout southern Asia.

It is still possible to get an agreement with Indians which will make them as valuable to us as the Chinese. The majority still are for the allies but the price of this co-operation now cannot be lowered a farthing. It is no less than a clear and final renunciation of all prerogatives of imperialism here against which we claim to be fighting elsewhere in the world.

What We Should Offer India

By Edward Thompson

We have left the vital problem of India unsolved. We are keeping most of her people's leaders in prison. We have disturbed world opinion by failing to give her the benefits of the Atlantic Charter. A new programme for India is essential now. †

INDIA is the test of whether we fight for democracy. The Atlantic Charter has everywhere raised one question. How does it apply to India, where we have thousands of political prisoners? British opinion is haunted by deep disquiet, tempered by an impatient feeling that Indian leaders, whatever their case, are acting shortsightedly and pedantically in a time of tremendous peril. The average British citizen then takes refuge in the reflection that the Indian problem is so complex that it must be left to officials with Indian experience—while we hope that somehow things will turn out right in the end, though we dread that they will not. Narrow the problem down to immediate essentials, and it is not complex at all.

Every Indian discussion starts with Mr. Gandhi, whose personality is unique. What does he want? He wants India to run her own affairs. This goes without saying. Indians consider that they understand their affairs far better than we can. But to Gandhi independence is merely a means to an end. He wants two things above all.

First, he wants an essentially peasant civilisation. He distrusts the machine civilisation, which has made men and women into implements. Despite growing industrialisation, India remains a land of peasants. One reason why Indians admire Russia is because Russia too is a land of peasants still, for all her majestic industrial progress. Russia, they say, has done much for the peasant and understands the peasant, while England is essentially an urban and industrialised civilisation and has never understood the peasant. Hence Gandhi's stress on the spinning wheel. It would enable the peasant to escape the breaking up of his home. He could live on in his village and earn the few extra annas a day he must have if he is ever to rise from physical wretchedness. I think Gandhi is supremely right. But his weakness as a politician, I feel, is that his mind still functions *too much on the village plane and does not understand the complexity of the modern world.* We must conquer the machine and not simply try to escape from it.

His second main doctrine is Non-Violence. To him all violence, and especially war, is wrong utterly. If men refuse to resist violence, even the aggressor, he says, must give way and be converted.

Combine Non-Violence with Civil Disobedience (refusal to pay taxes or co-operate with Government). What other weapon can the disarmed and physically helpless find? By these methods Gandhi won great successes in South Africa and India. But he was fighting Governments with some conscience. If he had been fighting Hitler, a firing squad would have closed the argument. To-day Non-Violence seems to me as out of date as the bows and arrows of Crecy.

In this most Indian leaders agree with me. Gandhi's political party, the National Congress, is under what is styled a Working Committee. Perhaps two of its seventeen members, when war came, shared Gandhi's deep faith in Non-Violence. Jawaharlal Nehru who knows modern war, told me, in October, 1939,

"Some' Congressmen say it would not be possible to make India enthusiastic on your side. I know they are wrong. I would guarantee to do it myself." Rajagopalachari, when France fell, said publicly, "India must take the place of France." His son holds a combatant commission from our King.

Why are he and Nehru in prison for opposing our war effort? Partly out of party discipline and loyalty to Gandhi. But this was not the main reason. They would have helped in a war for freedom. They did not believe that this was such a war. Ever since Japan first attacked China, India had watched our foreign policy with dismay. In its annual meetings, every year Congress warned us that India would not be a party, without her consent, to the war that was coming. When war came, Eire was allowed to stay neutral. But India was declared a belligerent, and not one of her parliaments was consulted. Yet she was eager to help-for she hated Fascism. Gandhi stood aside and waived Non-Violence, and Nehru drew up a manifesto asking if the war were really for democracy and, if so, how its aims would apply to India. In answer the Viceroy offered to form a Consultative Group to assist in "associating public opinion in India with the conduct of the war." That is. Indians might help in propagandising themselves. Government expressed also willingness after the war to re-examine the Indian Constitution.

Had the Congress leaders wanted jobs they could have had them. The Viceroy was willing to invite Indian leaders to join his Council. But, as Nehru wrote to me, "We are not going to be committed to an unknown and dangerous adventure unless we know what we are fighting for." The way they looked at it, the Indians would be fighting for the liberation and preservation of all nations but themselves. The Working Committee pulled out the Congress Cabinets, and seven Provinces went back to the autocratic rule of British officials. Things then drifted. Finally Mr. Gandhi launched *selected* civil disobedience.

Gandhi's Present Programme

Why did he not launch full civil disobedience? Had he done this he would have gone far towards making us lose the war. He insisted, however, that he would do nothing to embarrass the Government. It was a token resistance, a gesture. Also, the three previous civil disobediences had all been marked by outbreaks of violence. Crowds get excited, and India, Gandhi said, was not ready for the self-control which Non-Violent Resistance demands. So he detailed leaders to make speeches of protest against India's participation in the war. Nehru, his second choice, was sentenced to four years' rigorous imprisonment. India's jails have since filled up with men and women who, many of them, have been H. M. Cabinet Ministers, among them Rajagopalachari, who two years ago was Premier of Madras. Precise figures of the numbers imprisoned vary greatly. The Secretary of State for India was unable to give them when he was asked in the House of Commons. An ex-Congressman, in a speech in India, in May, 1941, gave the figure of 20,000 political prisoners. It was officially stated that in the United Province alone there were 12,000 prisoners on May 24th, 1941. Not one of them has any sympathy with Nazism.

Gandhi's action was a gesture of despair of ever getting Britain to care about India. But gestures are out of date. It is strange that he seems to have thought he might persuade the Government to concede the right to oppose the war—again, this was a gesture, for if the right had been granted I do not believe he would have exercised it. Also, he did all this on his doctrine of Non-Violence, rather than what was the quarrel's real basis, the question of a far-off country's right to declare India at war. He neither made war on the Government nor kept the peace. He chose a course which combined the disadvantages of both. He played into the hands of his chief opponent, Mr. Jinnah, President of the Muslim League. Jinnah, like Gandhi, has demonic drive, energy, courage. While Congress membership has been

declining, as its leaders disappeared into the silence and ineffectiveness of prison, the Muslim League has grown steadily in numbers and influence.

What Is The 'Defence Council'?

But if Gandhi's Non-Violence is out-of-date, what of our own Indian technique of totalitarian war? The Viceroy has now announced the names of his Defence Council. They are to meet for a few days—in alternate months. He has enlarged his Executive Council. No Indians of representative quality will serve on either. Those two famous personalities of the Round Table Conference, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and M. R. Jayakar, both remain outside. Much was made of the consent of several Muslim League members to serve. Mr. Jinnah has forced their immediate resignation.

Official spokesmen now style the Viceroy's Council a Cabinet. It is not a Cabinet. The Viceroy can overrule its decisions, subject only to the Secretary of State in London. Among the "reserved" subjects, which are in the Viceroy's sole control, are Defence and Foreign Affairs. No European member of his council in November, 1939, had even met Gandhi or Nehru or almost any non-official Indian of first importance. India in this war is being governed in a vacuum.

Little Indian news reaches Britain. But the Nazi wireless collects and relays plenty and throughout the United States the number and character of our prisoners and Nehru's four years' sentence are published incessantly. It is India which, more than any other factor, makes America "go off the boil" in her work for our cause.

Would it help if the prisoners were released? No, not unless other things were done first. Unless they are sure this war is for the freedom not merely of Ethiopia and Syria, but of India also, they will return to jail.

What We Ought To Do

What should we do? Do these things first. One, give a date for Dominion Status. Few Indians believe that we mean this; from twenty years' repetition the phrase humiliates. Our Government tells India that its date depends on Indians' agreement among themselves. In that case, it will never come. No country ever gets hundred per cent agreement. Indians think that we use the minorities, as the Nazis used the Sudeten and other German minorities, as a smoke screen.

Russia's resistance moves us deeply, and we say, it is because the Russian people have something to fight for, as they had not in Tsarist days. If India is to fight, why not for Dominion Status? Not simply for the *status quo*!

Secondly, as a pledge that we mean to act swiftly, a small committee to start work on India's Dominion Status Constitution should be set up now.

Thirdly, make the Viceroy's Council a Cabinet, with joint collective responsibility. Rajagopalachari has said that if this were done, he would guarantee to persuade his colleagues of the Congress Working Committee to accept a Muslim Premier for All India. In the spirit of this surpassingly generously offer I believe that Congress could be persuaded to make such sweeping concessions to the minorities that public opinion would make the continuation of the League and Congress quarrel an impossibility.

Secure *first* these conditions. Then men like Nehru may be asked to believe that this is no longer the phoney war brought on by phoney policies, against which they protested. We were then scattering leaflets while Poland died; we made big speeches about the certainty of victory because of our vast resources. "India," said a distinguished soldier to me in New Delhi, in October, 1939, "has a strong moral case. But," he added scornfully, "no one is going to ask

India to suffer *any* casualties." Since then Indian troops have died beside our men, and this easy war has become our people's war, and China's and Russia's war. Men in the Viceroy's jails cannot guess this. But make it India's war and release them to find a changed world full of hope.

Lastly, India cannot forget that it was our Prime Minister who, a few years back, led the opposition to any extension of Indian self-government. While he remains silent, what Viceroys and Secretaries of State say cuts little ice. He is not merely our own essential leader, he is leader of the war effort of the British Empire. If things remain as they now are, his speaking would not change things. But if Indians knew that self-government was at last definitely within sight, and at no great and dim distance then—if Mr. Churchill in his own imaginative fashion spoke to Indians as our equals and comrades, he would not speak in vain. Our enemies in U.S.A. and elsewhere could no longer use India to play havoc with our safety. Our cause would be the cleanest for which men have ever worked and died.

—*Picture Post*

Important Questions

By M. K. Gandhi

A FRIEND was discussing with me the implications of the new proposal. As the discussion was naturally desultory, I asked him to frame his questions which I would answer through *Harijan*. He agreed and gave me the following :

1. Q. You ask the British Government to withdraw immediately from India. Would Indians thereupon form a national Government, and what groups or parties would participate in such an Indian Government ?

A. My proposal is one-sided, *i.e.*, for the British Government to act upon, wholly irrespective of what Indians would do or would not do. I have even assumed temporary chaos on their withdrawal. But if the withdrawal takes place in an orderly manner, it is likely that on their withdrawal a provisional Government will be set up by and from among the present leaders. But another thing may also happen. All those who have no thought of the nation but only of themselves may make a bid for power and get together the turbulent forces with which they would seek to gain control somewhere and somehow. I should hope that with the complete, final and honest withdrawal of the British power, the wise leader will realise their responsibility, forget their differences for the moment and set up a provincial Government out

of the material left by the British power. As there would be no power regulating the admission or rejection of parties or persons to or from the Council board, restraint alone will be the guide. If that happens probably the Congress, the League and the States representatives will be allowed to function and they will come to a loose understanding on the formation of a provisional national Government. All this is necessarily guesswork and nothing more.

2. Q. Would that Indian national Government permit the United Nations to use Indian territory as a base of military operations against Japan and other Axis powers ?

A. Assuming that the national Government is formed and if it answers my expectations, its first act would be to enter into a treaty with the United Nations for defensive operations against aggressive powers, it being common cause that India will have nothing to do with any of the Fascist powers and India would be morally bound to help the United Nations.

3. Q. What further assistance would this Indian national Government be ready to render the United Nations in the course of the present war against the Fascist aggressors ?

A. If I have any hand in guiding the imagined national Government, there would be no further assistance save the toleration of the United Nations on the Indian soil under well-defined conditions. Naturally there will be no prohibition against any Indian giving his own personal help by way of being a recruit or/and of giving financial aid. It should be understood that the Indian army has been disbanded with the withdrawal of British power. Again if I have any say in the councils of the national Government, all its power, prestige and resources would be used towards bringing about world peace. But of course after the formation of the national Government my voice may

be a voice in the wilderness and nationalist India may go war-mad.

4. Q. Do you believe this collaboration between India and the Allied powers might or should be formulated in a treaty of alliance or an agreement for mutual aid ?

A. I think the question is altogether premature and in any case it will not much matter whether the relations are regulated by treaty or agreement. I do not even see any difference.

Let me sum up my attitude. One thing and only one thing for me is solid and certain. This unnatural prostration of a great nation—it is neither 'nations' nor 'peoples'—must cease if the victory of the Allies is to be ensured. They lack the moral basis. I see no difference between the Fascist or Nazi powers and the Allies. All are exploiters, all resort to ruthlessness to the extent required to compass their end. America and Britain are very great nations, but their greatness will count as dust before the bar of dumb humanity, whether African or Asiatic. They and they alone have the power to undo the wrong. They have no right to talk of human liberty and all else unless they have washed their hands clean of the pollution. That necessary wash will be their surest insurance of success, for they will have the good wishes—unexpressed but no less certain—of millions of dumb Asiatics and Africans. Then, but not till then will they be fighting for a new order. This is the reality. All else is speculation. I have allowed myself, however, to indulge in it as a test of my *bona fide* and for the sake of explaining in a concrete manner what I mean by my proposal.

—*Harijan*.

An Important Interview

By Mahadev Desai

THE heat here this year has been uncommonly oppressive, and even those who may be said to be inured to it have felt it. But Gandhiji would not listen to any suggestion of moving to, a cooler place—so possessed he is of his new idea, so disinclined he is to go to any other place but the environment that has now become part of himself. And though this serious preoccupation leaves him little time to meet people, he has willingly met press correspondents and opened his heart out to them. They too in their turn have come in this sweltering heat, but that is a pressman's job—to defy wind and weather and wrest facts out of events. So one hot afternoon two American journalists came—Mr. Chaplin of the International News Service, America, and Mr. Belldon representing the *Life* and *Time*. The latter is fresh from China and Burma. Both had heard rumours in New Delhi that Gandhiji might soon be arrested, and they naturally did not want to be forestalled. So they came post-haste, without even waiting for a reply giving them an appointment.

It was no joke jogging along in a rickety tonga through the treeless road that runs between Wardha and Sevagram. Gandhiji immediately put them in a good humour. "You came in an air-conditioned coach?" "No," they said, "but we had armed ourselves with some ice." Mr. Chaplin said he was a gr-

friend of the late Jim Mills and that revived our memories of that genial American who, Gandhiji said, after the manner of American journalists, often embellished truth to make it look nicer. Mr. Chaplin demurred to the generalisation, and said they were quite careful about truth. Gandhiji did not mean to suggest that they deliberately mixed untruth with truth; they loved to give truth an attractive, if imaginative, background, as, for instance, Jim Mills described Gandhiji sharing his goat's milk with a tame cat, when there was no cat in the picture. "The native genius" of Americans, John Buchan has said, "is for over-statement, a high-coloured, imaginative, paradoxical extravagance. The British gift is for understatement. Both are legitimate figures of speech. They serve the same purpose, for they call attention to a fact by startling the hearer, for manifestly they are not the plain truth." There, I think, is a just estimate of American journalists.

Gandhiji had just emerged from an intensive talk with another American when these friends came, and so he said greeting them, "one American has been vivisectioning me. I am now at your disposal."

Why Non-violent Non-Co-operation ?

They had read all kinds of things about Gandhiji's latest move—his own words wrenched from their context, and words written about him. "It is your worst side that is known in New Delhi, and not your best," another journalist had said to Gandhiji, and they were therefore anxious to straighten out wrong notions if they had any. Why non-violent non-co-operation, rather than honest straightforward resistance against the Japanese? Far from preventing the Japanese, non-violent non-co-operation, they feared, might prove an invitation to them, and would not that be flying from the frying pan into the fire?

Gandhiji put a counter question in reply :

"Supposing England retires from India for

strategic purposes, and apart from my proposal,—as they had to do in Burma—what would happen? What would India do?

“That is exactly what we have come to learn from you. We would certainly like to know that.”

“Well, therein comes my non-violence. For we have no weapons. Mind you, we have assumed that the Commander-in-Chief of the united American and British Armies has decided that India is no good as a base, and that they should withdraw to some other base and concentrate the allied forces there. We can't help it. We have then to depend on what strength we have. We have no army, no military resources, no military skill either, worth the name, and non-violence is the only thing we can fall back upon. Now in theory I can prove to you that our non-violent resistance can be wholly successful. We need not kill a single Japanese, we simply give them no quarter.”

“But that non-violence can't prevent an invasion?”

“In non-violent technique, of course, there can be nothing like preventing an invasion. They will land, but they will land on an inhospitable shore. They may be ruthless and wipe out all the 400 millions. That would be complete victory. I know you will laugh at it, saying ‘all this is superhuman, if not absurd.’ I would say you are right, we may not be able to stand that terror and we may have to go through a course of subjection worse than our present state. But we are discussing the theory?”

“But if the British don't withdraw?”

“I do not want them to withdraw under Indian pressure, nor driven by force of circumstances. I want them to withdraw in their own interest, for their own good name.”

“But what happens to your movement, if you are arrested, as we heard you might be? Or if

Mr. Nehru is arrested ? Would not the movement go to pieces ?

"No, not if we have worked among the people. Our arrests would work up the movement, they would stir every one in India to do his little bit."

"Supposing Britain decides to fight to the last man in India, would not your non-violent non-co-operation help the Japanese ?" asked Mr. Chaplin reverting to the first question he had asked.

"If you mean non-co-operation with the British, you would be right. We have not come to that stage. I do not want to help the Japanese—not even for freeing India. India during the past fifty or more years of her struggle for freedom has learnt the lesson of patriotism and of not bowing to *any* foreign power. But when the British are offering violent battle, our non-violent battle—our non-violent activity—would be neutralised. Those who believe in armed resistance and in helping the British militarily are and will be helping them. Mr. Amery says he is getting all the men and money they need, and he is right. For the Congress—a poor organisation representing the millions of the poor of India—has not been able to collect in years what they have collected in a day by way of what I would say 'so-called' voluntary subscription. This Congress can only render non-violent assistance. But let me tell you, if you do not know it, that the British do not want it, they don't set any store by it. But whether they do it or not, violent and non-violent resistance cannot go together. So India's non-violence can at best take the form of silence—not obstructing the British forces, certainly not helping the Japanese."

"But not helping the British ?"

"Don't you see non-violence cannot give any other aid ?"

"But the railways, I hope, you won't stop ; the services, too, will be, I hope, allowed to function"

"They will be allowed to function, as they are being allowed to-day."

"Aren't you then helping the British by leaving the services and the railways alone?" asked Mr. Belldon.

"We are indeed. That is our non-embarrassment policy."

A Bad Job

"But what about the presence of American troops here? Every American feels that we should help India to win her freedom."

"It's a bad job."

"Because it is said we are here really to help Britain and not India?"

"I say it is a bad job, because it is an imposition on India. It is not at India's request or with India's consent that they are here. It is enough irritation that we were not consulted before being dragged into this war—I am not sure that the Viceroy even consulted his Executive Council. That is our original complaint. To have brought the American forces is, in my opinion, to have made the stranglehold on us all the tighter."

"You do not know what is happening in India—it is naturally not your business to go into those things. But let me give you some facts. Thousands of villagers are being summarily asked to vacate their homes and go elsewhere, for the site of their homesteads is needed by the military. Now I ask, where are they to go? Thousands of poor labourers in a certain place, I have heard to-day, have been asked to evacuate. Paltry compensations are offered to them, and they are not even given sufficient notice. This kind of thing will not happen in an independent country. The Sappers and Miners there would first build homes for these people, transport would be provided for them, they would be given at least

What Would Free India Do?

Gandhiji had over and over again said that an orderly withdrawal would result in a sullen India becoming a friend and ally. These American friends now explored the implications of that possible friendship: "Would a Free India declare war against Japan?"

"Free India need not do so. It simply becomes the ally of the Allied Powers, simply out of gratefulness for the payment of a debt, however over-due. Human nature thanks the debtor when he discharges the debt."

"How then would this alliance fit in with India's non-violence?"

"It is a good question. The *whole* of India is non-violent. If the whole of India had been non-violent, there would have been no need for my appeal to Britain, nor would there be any fear of a Japanese invasion. But my non-violence is represented possibly by a hopeless minority, or perhaps by India's dumb millions who are temperamentally non-violent. But there too the question may be asked: 'What have they done?' They have done nothing, I agree; but they may act when the supreme test comes, and they may not. I have no non-violence of millions to present to Britain, and what we have has been discounted by the British as non-violence of the weak. And so all I have done is to make this appeal on the strength of bare inherent justice, so that it might find an echo in the British heart. It is made from a moral plane, and even as they do not hesitate to act desperately in the physical field and take grave risks, let them for once act desperately on the moral field and declare that India is independent to-day, irrespective of India's demand."

What about Muslims?

"But what does a free India mean, if, as Mr. Jinnah said, Muslims will not accept Hindu rule?"

"I have not asked the British to hand over India to the Congress or to the Hindus. Let them entrust India to God or in modern parlance to anarchy. Then all the parties will fight one another like dogs, or will, when real responsibility faces them, come to a reasonable agreement. I shall expect non-violence to arise out of that chaos."

"But *whom* are the British to say—'India is free'?" asked the friends with a certain degree of exasperation.

"To the world," said Gandhiji without a moment's hesitation. "Automatically the Indian army is disbanded from that moment, and they decide to pack up as soon as they can. Or they may declare they would pack up only after the war is over, but that they would expect no help from India, impose no taxes, raise no recruits—beyond what help India chooses to give voluntarily. British rule will cease from that moment, no matter what happens to India afterwards. To-day it is all a hypocrisy, unreality. I want that to end. The new order will come only when that falsity ends."

"It is an unwarranted claim Britain and America are making," said Gandhiji concluding the talk, "the claim of saving democracy and freedom. It is a wrong thing to make that claim, when there is this terrible tragedy of holding a whole nation in bondage."

Q. What can America do to have your demand implemented?

A. If my demand is admitted to be just beyond cavil, America can insist on the implementing of the Indian demand as a condition of her financing Britain and supplying her with her matchless skill in making war machines. He who pays the piper has the right to call the tune. Since America has become the predominant partner in the allied cause she is partner also in Britain's guilt. The Allies have no right to call their cause to be morally superior to the Nazi cause so long as they hold in custody the fairest part and one of the most ancient nations of the earth.

Congress Not Totalitarian

By Mr. C. Rajagopalachari

Mr. C. Rajagopalachari, addressing a meeting held on October 21 under the auspices of the Loyola College Union with Rev. Fr. D'Souza, the principal, in the chair, refuted the charges levelled at the Congress by Mr. Amery, reviewing the acts of the Congress.

MR. Rajagopalachari said : Despite the Principal's invitation to me to comment on current affairs as I would like, I do not think that the occasion is mature enough for one to launch on such a course. In the good old days when horse carriages were more in vogue than in these days of automobiles, I always had a sense of relief whenever on a journey the horse was changed and a fresh one was harnessed and the feeling that anything might be better than the old horse. When one Viceroy left and another came in, as now, there was a natural atmosphere of expectation accompanied by some hope. It would, however, not be right for one to talk or comment before one knew what the event was going to be ; on the other hand, that might do harm to the cherished cause.

My object on the occasion is to deal with some of the propaganda of lies now being carried on by men in very high quarters about Indian affairs. The following major lies, were on the market just now : The Bengal famine was due to provincial autonomy there ; the Cripps negotiations failed because of communal disse-

rences and non-agreement among the parties concerned; and the Congress practised totalitarianism as a result of which the Princes and the Muslim League became nervous and began to object to Federation and Lord Linlithgow failed in his programme for the political advancement of India. The failure of the Cripps negotiations was the one major tragedy in Indian affairs in modern times which could not be attributed to communal differences. The fact that men holding important positions like Mr. Herbert Morrison made themselves responsible for the "strange statement" that the negotiations failed because of communal differences showed that they believed public memory was short.

So far as I can understand it, the expression "totalitarianism" means a system of government which denied chances of existence or continuance to parties other than its own supporters, prevented elections or conducted elections in such a way that no other party except its own came up at the polls, reshuffled the Civil Services in a manner that no one who did not owe allegiance to itself, politically, could continue as a member thereof, and so arranged affairs inside the legislature that the Opposition got no real chance to express itself or the Opposition was merely a put-up show or some sort of "Devil's advocacy" in ecclesiastical parlance. In every one of its acts, a totalitarian body tended to the same result—extinction of all other political parties, so that ultimately the State and itself might become one.

British Reaction to Sweeping of Polls by Congress

I will confine myself to facts so far as Madras is concerned, and which are cent per cent within my knowledge.

The very first reaction of the British to huge majorities that the Congress obtained at the elections was one of thorough dislike for that organisation. The largeness of the majority commanded by the Congress should prove its popularity and the extent of trust

people reposed in it; but the British in their dislike for the Congress and all it stood for, dubbed it "totalitarian." The elections were conducted by the Ministries under dyarchy and British officials and the Congress could not be charged with having manipulated the elections, as totalitarian parties did, to destroy other parties. Nor did the Congress, after its success in the elections, make regulations for the destruction of other parties. These were not declared unlawful bodies, or forbidden to hold meetings or conferences fly flags or take out processions. The present administration did some of these things, but, then, it was not a party government and hence could not be described as "totalitarian"; it was "a single authoritarian dictatorship." No one from any party that functioned against the Congress could truthfully say that their liberties were taken away by the Congress Government. Then again, the Congress Governments did not reshuffle the public services with a view to replacing existing officials by people owing allegiance to itself. Not a single officer suffered because of his political views. On the other hand, when the Congress entered office, most of the appointments to key positions had already been made. The Advocate-General, judges of courts, Members of the Services Commission, and so on, had all been appointed under the preceding regime. The Congress did not interfere with any of the appointments.

Not only did the Congress regime not interfere with the functioning of other parties, it did not hesitate to take action against Congressmen and sympathisers of the Congress when it was considered necessary. Neither the Congress Executive nor members of the Congress interfered when action was taken against Messrs. Batliwala and Meherally. This was clear proof that the Congress had not the least tinge of totalitarianism.

As for the Opposition in the legislature, it was a miserable minority, so far as numbers went, but its members were always active and alert. The members of

world-order that one of the most effective means of securing it is for our spokesmen to be in evidence at the peace table and make themselves known as the champions of justice for all. I must likewise remind my compatriots of a force inimical to our cause which has always been there, and which has recently assumed prominence. I allude to the claim of the Dominions to pronounce their opinion on our claim to their status. The Cabinet have apparently allowed this claim, if a recent ministerial declaration in Parliament is to be accorded full weight. Mr. Lionel Curtis, once a prophet in Imperial politics, was the first to offend our ears by a blatant enunciation of it. But Montagu and Ramsay MacDonald both told me they found it necessary to consult. Dominion Premiers whenever India's Dominionhood came within ken. Smuts and Hertzog, Hughes, Massey and Meighen have all given opinions, in our favour, they assured me. The practice has perhaps hardened into a convention. We certainly know of the complaints of the Dominions that they were not consulted on this and that matter of high Imperial policy, and of the apologetic plea of Britain that distances and urgency alone had been in the way. Surely the argument is understandable, if not conclusive, that the creation of a new Dominion and its admission into what has been called a sisterhood concerns not only the oldest sister but the younger ones of the family as well. When the moment for decision arrives, I do not see any Dominion unwilling to welcome the stranger. One obstacle, however, there is, and it is both real and great. The Dominions will seek to get their anti-colour attitude confirmed and placed beyond question. Smuts is our strongest antagonist, and the other Premiers will range themselves behind him. He has long been advocating the consolidation of Africa, so far as it is under the British sphere of influence, into one vast area for the prevalence of white, in this case, of Boer civilisation. He now towers high among the world's greatest men. I have no doubt he feels that his moment is come. He can assume the tone and manner of a seer and solemnly

could have been implemented, India would not only have acquired immediately a far-reaching measure of self-government. But in the ordinary course of evolution, which would have probably been hastened by the war, would have obtained by now full and effective self-government as a member of the British Commonwealth. The first stage, that of setting up Provincial Governments with wide powers comparable to those of American or Australian States, was achieved in 1937 largely owing to Lord Linlithgow's tact and patience in handling leaders of the Congress Party. When in came to setting up federation, the difficulties arose.

"The Congress Party had always opposed the Federal part of the scheme and the hesitations of the Princes were increased by its action in fomenting trouble in Indian States. The Moslems who had hitherto been favourable on the whole to the Federal plan, were in the meantime brought into vigorous opposition to it by their experience of the totalitarian methods of the Congress Party in autonomous Provinces. There the Congress Ministries were functioning under orders of the Congress Working Committee—in other words Mr. Gandhi and not in responsibility to the legislatures in which they used their Majorities to impose the policies dictated to them by the Working Committee. It was the fear that this experience might be repeated on an All India scale that turned both the Moslem League and the princes against the Federal scheme of the Government of India Act of 1935.

"The reactions against Congress methods led to a rapid cohesion of Moslems during the next few years under Mr. Jinnah, who declared that no form of Indian Federation will be acceptable to the Moslems and that as a separate nation they will insist on being an entirely independent dominion or dominions separate from the rest of India. There can be no doubt that the Congress Party's handling of the temporary advantage gained in the 1937 elections so

alienated and alarmed both the Princes and the Moslems as to make a constitution of the kind provided by the Act of 1935 impossible.

"While the political position was thus deteriorating, the war broke out. The Congress Party boycotted the Assembly, which, in its absence passed all necessary war legislation without a division.

"With unwearying patience Lord Linlithgow tried vainly for the next few months to bring the various Indian parties into co-operation with each other and with the Government in the prosecution of the war. His declaration in August 1940 that India would be free to frame any constitution she liked for herself at the end of the war and under that constitution enjoy free and equal partnership in the British Commonwealth, so far from mollifying the intransigent attitude of the Congress Party, only increased its resentment, because it stipulated that the future constitution must be agreed between all parties. Mr. Gandhi by his pacifism and his conviction that we are bound to be defeated, was again able to secure rejection by the Congress Party of the proposals made by Sir Stafford Cripps in 1942 for self-government after the war and immediate participation by the party leaders in the present Government of India. He even convinced himself that a mass campaign of sabotage—or, as he described it himself, an "open rebellion"—would force the British Government, confronted by a Japanese invasion, to surrender unconditionally to his demand that it should 'quit India.' It is a tribute to Lord Linlithgow's wise handling of that situation that when the trial of strength came, not only the Indian majority of his Executive Council but public opinion in India and opinion in the Services stood solidly behind the Government in its firm handling of the Congress rebellion. Meanwhile the proposals made by Sir Stafford Cripps have remained open and will remain open, but necessary agreement between the various elements in India is still lacking. No doubt such agreement is made the more difficult.

when leaders of the most important political party are under detention and prevented from negotiating with other parties. But Lord Linlithgow rightly held that men who are prepared to instigate an open rebellion in time of war cannot have it both ways. They cannot be free to conduct negotiations with other parties with the assent of the Government and seek also to overthrow that Government by unconstitutional means. They must disavow that course of action before they can be regarded as qualified to resume any part in the constitutional shaping of India's future.

"Apart from all this Lord Linlithgow's pre-occupation has naturally been the conduct of the war. His far-sighted interest and energy and inspiration in every problem of war have played no small part in the immense expansion of the Indian Army, in its achievements in field, and in India's war effort in every direction. It was on his initiative that the Eastern Supply Council was created at the end of 1940 to secure the most effective complimentary co-operation in supplies between the Southern and the Eastern Countries of the British Empire.

"India's tremendous war effort has thrown an enormous strain on her economic system, on her internal transport, and coastal shipping. With an immense export, visible and invisible, and no corresponding import of consumer goods, as well as reduction of domestic production of such goods, prices have inevitably risen.

"It remains to be seen whether with the progress of our arms outside India, the internal situation of India may so develop as to persuade Indian leaders of the desirability of coming together and making those mutual concessions and compromises upon which alone a stable full self-government can be based. There can be no doubt that any such advance in the Indian political opinion would be met with sympathetic and encouraging response from the Viceroy, from India generally and from his Majesty's Government."